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U-5/U-6 Soccer Rules & Regulations

Equipment

Gym, tennis, or soccer shoes are permitted. No hard, dangerous equipment, or jewelry of any kind is permitted. Every player must wear shin guards. Team shirts must be worn. If a shirt is not available a shirt of like color should be worn. Shirts must be worn on the outside of a coat/jacket/sweater to distinguish teams.

Ball Size

The game ball shall be a Size 3.

Number of Players

Games should be played in a 3 v 3 format. (3 players from each team with NO goalies)
If a team is short of players the coaches may decide to share players to accommodate.
If neither team has enough players to play a game then coaches should put the players they do have together and practice. (Games such as kick the coach, sharks and fish, freeze tag, kick out, and 1 v 1 can be played with a relatively small number of players.)

Playing Time

Every player should be given the opportunity to play at least half of the game time. An exception to this rule may be made if a team has more than two full "rotations" of players. (i.e. more than 6 players)

Substitutions

Substitutions at this age level should be made at the coaches' discretion. However, a player should be taught not to leave or enter the field during play. Coaches should substitute players only during periods when play has been stopped. This occurs when the ball has gone out of bounds, a goal has been scored, or when play has been interrupted by injury, coaches' call, etc.

Referee

The referees for this age level are the coaches. Coaches may be in the field of play as long as their presence does not hinder the flow of the game. Coaches are expected to understand and enforce all rules of the game **such that the players are given the appropriate freedom to learn them.** Remember that the overall objective of the game is for players to have fun in a safe environment.

Linesmen

No linesmen are needed at this age. The coaches shall use their discretion as to which team played the ball out of bounds, etc.

Time Periods

The U-5/U-6 time block is 1 hour. The first 30 minutes are to be used for practice while the final 30 minutes are to be used for game time. A brief half time can be implemented but is not required for such a short game. It shall be up to the coaches to decide whether a half time is needed.

Kick-Off

On the kick-off, the ball must travel in the direction of the opponent's half of the field a distance of its circumference (about two feet) before it's in play. At this level the kick-off is an indirect free kick and thus a goal **cannot** be scored directly from a kick-off. Players of the opposing team must be at least 3 yards from the ball at the center of the field until the ball is played.

Temporary stop in play

After a temporary suspension of play (due to injury or other unforeseen circumstance), a coach shall restart the game by a drop-ball or toss that must hit the ground before it can be played. A goal can be scored directly from a drop-ball.

Out of Bounds

The ball is out of bounds when all of it crosses completely beyond the endline or sideline, either in the air or on the ground. If any part of the ball is above any part of the line, the ball is in bounds. (Coaches: use discretion with the U5 & U6. For example, if the players are playing the ball aggressively and the ball goes **slightly** out of bounds due to lack of coordination then you may want to let them play. This will keep the flow of the game, while teaching the players to "play to the whistle" in the future. In U6 coaches should be stricter to teach players to keep the ball in play.)

Goal Scored

A goal is scored when the entire soccer ball crosses completely over the goal line between the goal posts, provided it was not carried, thrown, or propelled by the arm or hand of the attacking player. If a defending player deliberately deflects the ball with hands or arms and the ball goes in the goal, a goal is scored. If the ball does not go in, an indirect free kick is awarded the attacking team from the penalty area line. No penalty kicks are awarded in U-5/U-6 soccer.

Playing without the Goalkeeper

No goalkeepers are used in U-5/U-6 soccer. When playing small-sided games without goalies players focus on fundamental skills such as moving and playing as a team. No player should be taught to stand in front of their goal while their teammates are in play at the opposing end of the field. Small-sided games should not only be enjoyable, but also conducive to the development of footwork, team opportunities, communication, and appropriate offensive and defensive skills.

Offside

At this time the offside infraction will **not** be enforced at the U-5/U-6 level. A player is offside when he is ahead of the ball and it is played to him by a teammate, unless - A) he is in his half of the field; or B) two opponents are nearer their goal line than he is; or C) he received the ball from a corner kick, goal kick, throw-in, or drop-ball. For an infraction of the offside rule, an indirect kick is awarded the defending team at the point of infraction.

Fouls

A foul is committed if a player intentionally:

- Slide tackles another player
- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges an opponent in a dangerous manner
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Holds an opponent (either by gripping with the hand or extending the arm to gain or prevent movement)
- Pushes an opponent
- Spits at any player, coach, or referee
- Swears at any player, coach, or referee
- Carries, strikes, handles or propels the ball with his arms or hands.
- Playing in a dangerous manner
- Intentionally obstructing an opponent

An **indirect free kick** is awarded to the offended team at the point where the offense occurred. A goal cannot be scored directly from this kick (i.e. ball **must** touch a player first).

In the extremely rare occasion that a player continues to purposefully make dangerous plays he or she should be removed from the field of play until he or she completely understands how to play without placing any player, coach, or spectator in danger.

At this age some inadvertent unintentional fouls will occur. It is at the discretion of the coaches as to whether an infraction should be penalized. It is extremely important at this age to develop a player's fundamental skills while teaching him or her the rules and regulations of the game. In many instances a coach may simply tell a player what he or she can and cannot do in the game. If the infraction continues a coach should begin awarding indirect kicks to the offended team and continue to instruct his or her team on the correct way to play.

Advantage

A referee may refrain from penalizing in cases where he is satisfied that by doing so he would give an advantage to the offending team. The offending player or team will retain the advantage (have more of an advantage by retaining the ball without game stoppage); no foul will be called. An exception to this rule would be when a serious infraction such as an intentional slide tackle, trip, or other dangerous play occurs. The ball will automatically be awarded to the offended team at the point of the infraction.

Penalty Kick

No penalty kicks will be awarded in U-5/U-6 soccer.

Throw-In

Throw-ins are not awarded at this age due to lack of player coordination, balls in the air, and game delay.

Goal Kick

A goal kick is taken if the ball has completely crossed the end line/goal line (outside the goal posts) after being last-touched by the player from the attacking team. A goal kick is generally taken from the smaller goal box line. For this age the goal kick will be taken from the goal line. All opposing players should be at least 4 yards from the ball when it is kicked.

Corner Kick

A corner kick is awarded the attacking team if the ball passes completely over the goal line, outside the goal posts, after the last touched by the defending team. The corner kick is taken within the quarter circle at the corner flag nearest the point where the ball crosses the goal line. The corner flag (if present) must not be removed when taking the corner kick. A goal can be scored directly on a corner kick, since the corner kick is a direct free kick.

Under 8 soccer rules & regulations

Equipment

Gym, tennis, or soccer shoes are permitted. No hard, dangerous equipment, or jewelry of any kind is permitted. Every player must wear shin guards. Team shirts must be worn. If a shirt is not available a shirt of like color should be worn. Shirts must be worn on the outside of a coat/jacket/sweater to distinguish teams.

Ball Size

The game ball shall be a Size 4.

Number of Players

Games should be played in a 4 v 4 format. (4 players from each team with NO goalies)
If a team is short of players the coaches may decide to share players to accommodate. If a team does not wish to share players then that team needs to play without as many players as needed to accommodate a game in which both teams have the same number of players. If neither team has enough players then the coaches should decide whether to cancel or reschedule the game. When rescheduling a game make sure it does not conflict with other games or practices at the complex.

Playing Time

Every player should be given the opportunity to play at least half of the game time. An exception to this rule may be made if a team has more than two full "rotations" of players. (i.e. more than 8 players)

Substitutions

No player shall enter or leave the field of play without having first received the referee's (coaches') permission. At this age level coaches may substitute players during game stoppage for any kick-off, goal kick, corner kick, throw-in, or injury.

Referee

The referees for this age level are the coaches. Coaches may be in the field of play as long as their presence does not hinder the flow of the game. Coaches are expected to understand and enforce all rules of the game **such that the players are given the appropriate freedom to learn them.** At the U8 level more calls will be made than at the U5/U6 level. (As the age progresses so should the strictness of calls.) Remember that the overall objective of the game is for players to have fun in a safe environment while learning the fundamentals of the game including the rules.

Linesmen

No linesmen are needed at this age. The coaches shall use their discretion as to which team played the ball out of bounds, etc.

Time Periods

The U-8 time block is one hour. The first 10-15 minutes is used for warm up. The game will include two twenty-minute halves. One five-minute half time will separate the two halves. There will be no time-outs. After half time the two teams will switch defending-ends of the field.

Kick-Off

On the kick-off, the ball must travel in the direction of the opponent's half of the field a distance of its circumference (about two feet) before it's in play. At this level the kick-off is an indirect free kick and thus a goal **cannot** be scored directly from a kick-off. Players of team opposite the kicking team must stay out of center circle (or at least 4 yards from the ball) until ball is put into play.

Temporary stop in play

After a temporary suspension of play (other than that after an infraction, or ball played out of bounds), a coach/referee shall restart the game by a drop-ball that must hit the ground before it can be played. A goal can be scored directly from a drop-ball.

Out of Bounds

The ball is out of bounds when all of it crosses completely beyond the endline or sideline, either in the air or on the ground. If any part of the ball is above any part of the line, the ball is in bounds.

Goal Scored

A goal is scored when the entire ball crosses completely over the goal line between the goal posts, provided it was not carried, thrown, or propelled by the arm or hand of the attacking player. If a defending player deliberately deflects the ball with hands or arms and the ball goes in the goal, a goal is scored. If the ball does not go in then an indirect free kick is awarded the attacking team from the penalty area line. No penalty kicks will be awarded in U-8 soccer.

Playing without the Goalkeeper

No goalkeepers are used in U-8 soccer. When playing small-sided games without goalies players focus on fundamental skills such as moving and playing as a team. No player should be taught to stand in front of their goal while their teammates are in play at the opposing end of the field. Small-sided games should not only be enjoyable, but also conducive to the development of footwork, team opportunities, communication, and appropriate offensive and defensive skills.

Offside

At this time the offside infraction will **not** be enforced at the U-8 level. A player is offside when he is ahead of the ball and it is played to him by a teammate, unless - A) he is in his half of the field; or B) two opponents are nearer their goal line than he is; or C) he received the ball from a corner kick, goal kick, throw-in, or drop-ball. For an infraction of the offside rule, an indirect kick is awarded the defending team at the point of infraction.

Major Fouls

A serious foul is committed if a player intentionally:

- Slide-tackles another player
- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges an opponent in a dangerous manner
- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Holds an opponent (either by gripping with the hand or extending the arm to gain or prevent movement)
- Pushes an opponent
- Spits at any player, coach, or referee
- Swears at any player, coach, or referee
- Carries, strikes, handles or propels the ball with his/her arms or hands except for throw-ins.

An **indirect free kick** is awarded to the offended team at the point where the offense occurred. A goal cannot be scored directly from this kick (i.e. ball **must** touch a player first).

In the event that a player makes a dangerous play, the coach should immediately speak with that player about what he or she did wrong. If the player commits another dangerous play then he or she should be removed from the field of play until he or she completely understands how to play without placing any player, coach, referee, or spectator in danger. If the player returns to the game and engages in any additional dangerous plays he or she should be removed from the field of play for the remainder of the game.

Minor Fouls

- Obstructing an opponent
- Delaying the game
- Substituting without referees/coaches' permission

Discretion should be used when a minor infraction occurs. (See below) If the infraction gives any advantage to the offending team then an **indirect free kick** should be awarded to the offended team at the point where the offense occurred. A goal cannot be scored directly from this kick (i.e. ball **must** touch a player first).

At this age some inadvertent unintentional fouls will occur. It is at the discretion of the coaches/referees as to whether an infraction should be penalized. It is extremely important to develop a player's fundamental skills while teaching him or her the rules and regulations of the game. In some instances a coach/referee may simply tell a player what he or she can and cannot do in the game. However, if the infraction reoccurs or continues, a coach/referee should award an indirect kick to the offended team and continue to instruct his or her team on the correct way to play.

Advantage

A referee may refrain from penalizing in cases where he is satisfied that by doing so he would give an advantage to the offending team. The offending player or team will retain the advantage (have more of an advantage by retaining the ball without game stoppage); no foul will be called. An exception to this rule would be when a serious infraction such as an intentional slide tackle, trip, or other dangerous play occurs. The ball will automatically be awarded to the offended team at the point of the infraction.

Penalty Kick

No penalty kicks will be awarded in U-8 soccer.

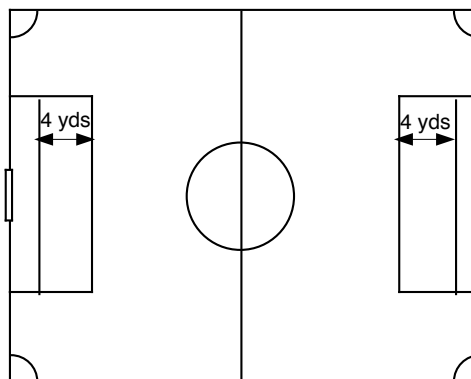
Throw-In

A throw-in is awarded if the ball completely passes over the sideline either on the ground or in the air, from the point where it crosses the line. A player of the team opposite of the team who last played or touched it throws in the ball. The person who throws the ball must face the field and part of each foot shall be on the ground and on or behind the sideline. The ball must be thrown overhead with both hands. On the throw-in, the ball is immediately in play, but the thrower shall not play the ball a second time before the ball is touched by another player. A goal cannot be scored directly on a throw-in.

Special note: On throw-ins in U-8 soccer players shall be taught to throw the ball in such a way that the ball is directed toward the feet or ground. No player shall attempt to throw the ball directly at or over another player. (The player taking the throw-in may throw the ball to his or her own players below the waist.)

Goal Kick

A goal kick is awarded the **defending** team if the ball has completely passed over the end-line/goal-line (outside the goal posts) after being last-touched by a player from the attacking team. The goal kick shall be taken from the line marked 4 yards inside the goal box, nearest the point where the ball crossed the goal line. The player taking the goal kick must kick the ball outside of the goal box. If the goal kick does not travel outside the goal box, the kick should be retaken. All team players and opposing players must be outside the goal box area when a goal kick is taken. No player shall touch the ball until the ball has completely left the goal box.



Corner Kick

A corner kick is awarded the **attacking** team if the ball passes completely over the end-line/goal-line, outside the goal posts, after being last-touched by the defending team. The corner kick is taken within the quarter circle at the corner nearest the point where the ball crossed the goal line. The corner flag (if present) must not be removed when taking the corner kick. All players must be at least 4 yards from the ball until it is played. A goal can be scored directly on a corner kick, since the corner kick is a direct free kick.

U9 and above soccer rules & regulations

The rules and regulations for youth ages 9 and above conform to the league with which each respective team plays and can be found on their website or the Nebraska State Soccer Association website.

Blair Soccer Association Coaching Progression

The following are the specific skills and mentality that we must provide our players to maintain adequate growth as our youth proceed through each stage of development. It should be understood that these are the basic soccer related expectations of our coaches and players. Some teams may be prepared to include additional challenging skills, while others will need to implement additional basic skills.

All coaches should also understand that while these skills are important they do not replace or downplay the importance of educating our youth on life skills such as self-discipline, motivation, confidence, responsibility, teamwork, and appropriate behavior. These life skills should under no circumstance be compromised to win any single game or develop a "win at all cost" mentality.

All coaches must review all age categories to ensure that his or her players have adequately learned the skills for the appropriate age level. (Some players may still need additional work on the skills from earlier age progressions.) Each coach is expected to work toward helping each player gain the skills they need to play to their potential in an enjoyable environment.

Coaching Progression: U5 (ages 4-5)

- Have fun. Try to play games as much as possible. Keep the kids involved at all times.
- Players need to Know direction: Which goal to score on and which goal to defend.
- Players should work on ball control, dribbling, basic trapping (receiving and settling the ball with feet), passing, and **trying** to use the tops & insides of feet. The coach should give constant reminders to **not** use toes to kick the ball.
- The coach should give occasional reminders to spread out when possible. At this age players will naturally bunch up. The coach should simply give gentle reminders in games and drills.
- Teach players, when the other team has the ball, to go get it back and try to defend your goal.
- The coach should give continual reminders to players to keep their feet moving when dribbling, etc.
- Players should know where the field boundaries are: Teach them when to stop play.
- On kick-offs teach players how to pass the ball forward.
- The coach should display appropriate enthusiasm for the game. If you are excited the players will be excited.
- Footwork/Moves: The coach should teach the players to **chop and pullback** the ball. Remember that not all players will get it right away. Just continue to work on it and have fun! (See Blair Soccer Footwork Video)

Coaching Progression: U6 (ages 5-6)

- Have fun. Try to play games as much as possible. Keep the kids involved at all times.
- Players need to Know direction: Which goal to score on and which goal to defend.
- Players should work on ball control, dribbling, basic trapping (receiving and settling the ball), trying to use the tops & insides of feet & begin practicing pulling and rolling ball with bottoms of feet.
- Players should begin working on passing the ball during free play and dead balls. Try to play games/drills that involve passing and talking between players.
- The coach should introduce field communication. This includes players calling for a pass if another is open, etc.
- The coach should give constant reminders to spread out.
- Players should know when the other team has the ball go defend and try to get it back immediately. Give constant reminders to go quickly after the ball when the opponent wins it.
- Teach basic defense - get between ball and goal when opponent gets ball. Do not teach players to directly stand in front of the goal as a goalie when the other players are working toward the opponent's goal. All players should be involved in offense and defense. There are no goalies.
- The coach should teach players to keep their feet moving when dribbling and attacking the ball.
- The coach needs to teach the players that when they play the ball out of bounds the opponent gets the ball. Reinforce with them to try to keep the ball in play.
- The coach should teach players how to pass the ball to teammates on dead balls and free play.
- Footwork/Moves: The coach should teach and reinforce with the players how to **chop and pullback** the ball. The coach should also teach the V-cut and Lunge. Remember that all players may not get it right away. Just continue to work on it and have fun! (See Blair Soccer Footwork Video)

Coaching Progression: U8 (ages 7-8)

- Having **Fun** while competing. At this age we still want coaches to continue to play games to teach skills during practice, but the coaches should put more emphasis on learning the proper skills, technique, communication, and teamwork.
- At this age we must ensure that our players have much better **ball control** than in U6. Players should not be kicking the ball just to kick it. Players should be taught to pass and play with a purpose.
- Coaches should enhance the players **trapping** skills. All players should gain the ability to receive the ball with both feet and thighs to settle the ball.
- Coaches should enhance the players **dribbling** skills. All players should gain the ability to use the tops & insides of feet & pulling and rolling ball with bottom of feet.
- Coaches should teach and reinforce **passing and shooting** the ball with laces (top of feet) and inside of feet. Players should be told repeatedly to avoid using their toes.
- Players should know how to **throw-in**. When the ball goes out of play on the sideline the opposing team throws the ball in. He/she must throw the ball in with both hands beginning with the ball behind his/her head. The player's feet may not leave the ground.
- The coach should give constant reminders to spread out: Try to keep players **balanced** on the field: left/right side. Introduction to minor positions. (For example, forward, left mid, right mid, and defender) Try to teach outside players to play on their side while coming only to the middle of the field. The outside players should not crowd their own teammates. A good rule of thumb is to spread out on offense and pull in slightly tighter on defense. There are additional strategies, etc. that they will gain as they progress through each year.
- Players should be taught how to be more aggressive to the ball, but not out of control. When the other team has the ball your players should get goal-side of the ball. (Goal-side means to get their body between the ball and the goal) Defenders should not be taught to stand in front of the goal while their teammates are attacking at the opponent's end. There are no goalies in our U8 soccer program. Players should be taught to move up with the rest of their team, but staying in their respective positions. For example, when attacking the opponent's goal the defender should move up with their team but keep himself or herself at a safe distance behind the ball.
- Players should be able to **keep moving** with or without the ball. They should not stop to look around. Players should know how to pass and change direction during free play. Players should be **introduced** to passing the ball into space. For example, if another player is running up the field the player with the ball should pass the ball into the space in front of the runner, not behind him.

- Players should be **learning** what to do on a corner kick, throw-in, goal kick, kick-off, or other dead ball situation.
 - Corner Kicks - The person taking the corner kick should try to play the ball toward the front of the goal where his or her teammates are positioned to win the ball. If a player cannot play the ball that far then he or she should play the ball to a teammate who is positioned closer to the corner. All other players should be in a position to assist in attacking the ball in front of the goal, but not "hiding" behind defenders.
 - Throw-ins - The thrower should look to throw the ball up the field in the direction of the opponent's goal. The thrower is usually the player on that side of the field. He or she should throw the ball toward the teammate (or space in front of) nearest and up field of his/her position.
 - Goal kicks - The player who usually takes goal kicks is a defender or goalie. Since there are no goalies in U8 it should be a defender. (Remember that on a goal kick the ball must completely exit the goal box before it can be played again.) He or she should be taught to play the ball as far as they can to the outside and up-field into space in front of a teammate. His or her teammates should position themselves close enough to receive the ball and move it up field.
 - Kick-offs - The center player usually takes the kick-off. He or she should play the ball diagonally into the space in front of either of the midfielders or forwards. Remember, on a kick-off, the ball must travel a distance of at least the circumference of the ball into the opponent's half of the field before being played again.)

- Teach and encourage field communication. Use words such as "Pass, Line, Ball, Diagonal, Drop, Square".
 - Line- If a player calls, "line!" he or she is in position to receive a ball up field of the current ball position.
 - Diagonal - If a player calls, "diagonal!" he or she is in position to receive a ball diagonally forward or backward of the current ball position.
 - Drop - If a player calls, "drop!" he or she is in position to receive a ball backward from the current ball position.
 - Ball - Ball is just a term called when you are not exactly in any of the other positions and you are letting the person with the ball know, immediately, that you are available for a quick play.

- Footwork/Moves: Players should become very comfortable with the **Chop, Pullback, V-cut, and Lunge**. Players should be taught **J-cut, scissors, and Matthews**. Coaches may even introduce the German and Kruyf although they may not be perfected for quite some time. They should practice ALL these moves every day. (See Blair Soccer Footwork Video)

Coaching Progression: U9/U10 (Ages 8-10)

Note: U9 & U10 players should be taught the same concepts though the level of ability, detail, and rigor should be higher in U10 than in U9.

- Having fun while competing.
- Passing, Basic foot trapping, Dribbling, and shooting should be basic skills for players at this age, however, they should still be practiced every day. All players should be able to handle ball adjustment with all parts of the feet.
- Coaches should continue to reinforce **trapping** skills. All players should become comfortable receiving and settling the ball with their feet. Coaches should encourage proper receiving and settling of the ball with the thighs and chest as well.
- At 9-10 years old players should be learning the basics of heading the ball. Players should **not** be taking goalie punts or very high balls with their heads at this age. They should, however, be taught to receive or run through a bouncing or played ball (when necessary) with the head. Proper heading form is to make ball contact with the **forehead only**. **Do not** teach players to use the top or sides of their head.
- Players should know how to throw-in and know what to do strategically on throw-ins.
- Players should be comfortable with staying spread out on field. Coaches should continue to keep players balanced on field. (Left/right side) Players should be **very** comfortable with avoiding "bunch-ball".
- Introduction to positions. Players should know the positions of forward, right mid-fielder, left mid-fielder, right defender, left-defender, and Goalkeeper. All players should receive opportunities to experience all positions. This helps them to not only develop all positional skills but also to understand the roles of each position.
- Introduction to position rotation during free-play. For example, if the right mid-fielder gets beat the right defender moves up to take the ball. The right mid-fielder who got beat should be running back to help by rotating behind the defender, goal-side of the ball. Goal-side of the ball means to get between the ball and the goal.
- Players should know how to quickly get back on defense. They should know how to get goal-side of the ball.
- Players should be taught more aggressive play, **not** out of control. When the opponent has the ball we should pressure him/her to get it back. Coaches should constantly reinforce immediate response when losing possession of the ball.
- Coaches must teach proper 1 v 1 defensive stance. One leg up and one leg back. When a player steps to attack the ball he/she should not stand flat footed with their legs 'square' and open. With one leg up and one back they can move quicker from side to side with more control and contain the attacker.
- At this level players should not be stopping to 'set' the ball during free play at all. Players should know how to pass and change direction during free play and use basic communication and movement in doing so.
- Players should be familiar with passing to feet and passing to space. There are situations that require passes directly to a teammate, while others require passes in to the space near a teammate. Players should begin to understand this concept.
- Players should be taught 'give and goes' - 'wall passes'.

- Players should be familiar with **quick play** and know what to do on a corner kick, throw-in, goal kick, kick-off, or other dead ball situation. They should be more comfortable with not hiding behind opponents.
 - Corner Kicks - The person taking the corner kick should try to play the ball toward the front of the goal where his or her teammates are positioned to win the ball. If a player cannot play the ball that far then he or she should play the ball to a teammate who is positioned closer to the corner who will look to shoot or make an offensive play. All other players should be in a position to assist in attacking the ball in front of the goal, but not "hiding" behind defenders.
 - Throw-ins - The thrower should look to throw the ball up the field in the direction of the opponent's goal. The thrower is usually a player on that side of the field. He or she should throw the ball toward the teammate (or space in front of) nearest and up field of his/her position. Receiving players should be taught to make runs.
 - Goal kicks - The player who usually takes goal kicks is the defender or goalie. It is recommended that the goalie take the kick. If he/she is unable to kick the ball very far then have one of the defenders take it. (Remember that on a goal kick the ball must completely exit the goal box before it can be played again.) He or she should be taught to play the ball as far as they can to the outside and up-field into space in front of a midfield or forward. His or her teammates should position themselves close enough to receive the ball and move it up the field quickly to create a scoring opportunity. The defenders should not position themselves too far away from the goal box because if the goal kick is short then the opponents will have a good opportunity to score.
 - Kick-offs - The center player usually takes the kick-off. One of the outside players should come to the center to receive the ball from the first touch off the center. The receiver should quickly decide whether to play the ball to another teammate, or dribble. The coach may work on how the players should handle the kick-offs. (Remember, on a kick-off, the ball must travel a distance of at least the circumference of the ball into the opponent's half of the field before being played again.)

- Coaches should encourage proactive soccer instead of reactive soccer. This means that players should not "ball watch" to see what is going to happen, then decide to move. Players should be coached to anticipate and pressure the ball and opponents.
- Coaches should constantly encourage field communication. Players should know and use words such as "Pass, Line, Ball, Diagonal, Drop, and Square".
 - Line- If a player calls, "line!" he or she is in position to receive a ball up field of the current ball position.
 - Diagonal - If a player calls, "diagonal!" he or she is in position to receive a ball diagonally forward or backward of the current ball position.
 - Drop - If a player calls, "drop!" he or she is in position to receive a ball backward from the current ball position.
 - Ball - Ball is just a term called when you are not exactly in any of the other positions and you are letting the person with the ball know, immediately, that you are available for a quick play.

- Coaches should encourage all players to move while on the field. Teach the importance of the players without the ball. The players without the ball must know that they create opportunities for the player with the ball by their movement and communication.

- **Footwork/Moves:** Players should be very comfortable with the **Chop, Pullback, V-cut, and Lunge, J-cut, scissors, and Matthews**. Players should begin to perfect the **German and kruyf**. They should practice ALL these moves every day. (See Blair Soccer Footwork Video)
- **Goalkeepers:** Players should become familiar with playing with a goalie. This includes communication of the goalie to his/her teammates. At this age most, if not all, players on the team should be given the opportunity to experience the goalie position. Goalies should be taught basic goal keeping skills such as catching the ball (hands in the 'w'), going to the ball, getting one's body between the ball and the goal (angles), basic diving, basic punting and throwing, clearing the ball, and goal kicks.
- **Speed and quickness** become more of a factor with age, however, we should not coach to speed alone. For example, if your fastest players only use speed to beat defenders and never use any moves, passing, or other skills then when he/she is older and is matched for speed he/she will be mediocre. All players should be taught to use all skills of the game.

Coaching Progression: U11/U12 (Ages 10-12)

This age group sees some growth in their physical traits and awareness.

- They should have improved fine motor skills
- They should have better accuracy
- Their coordination is still developing
- They should have increased attention span, but it does not extend to lengthy instructions.
- They are still playing for fun and enjoyment.
- They are beginning to understand team play.

Of paramount importance in developing youth soccer players at this age group is the continuing development of basic skills with the added pathway to more advanced skills, a greater focus on understanding the mechanics of the game of soccer, and the persistence of fostering of a genuine pleasure of the game with the added component of the competitive edge.

Basic Skills (U11/U12 - Ages 10-12)

Increase the speed and proficiency attached to all of these skills.

- **Intermediate Passing**

- Short range passing with all parts of the foot using both feet
 - Mid range passing with all parts of the foot
 - Wall passing - Can initiate and perform proper wall passes.
 - Crossing the ball during free play and chipping the ball

- **Intermediate Trapping**

- Trapping with both feet
 - Trapping with both thighs
 - Trapping with chest

- **Intermediate Heading**

- Defensive headers - Playing high balls out of the defensive end with the head.
 - Nodding the ball - Bringing the ball to the feet using the head.
 - Attacking headers - Scoring with the head

- **Intermediate Dribbling**

- Dribbling with almost complete vision
 - Fluency in running with the ball and being able to adjust ball with all parts of feet

- **Intermediate Shooting**

- Long range shooting
 - Short range finishing

- **Intermediate Close Control Skills**

- One - touch and two-touch exchanges
 - Moves - Know how to perform v-cut, j-cut, lunge, matthews, scissors, german, and kruyf and when it is appropriate to use them.

Advanced Skills (U11/U12 - Ages 10-12)

- **Advanced Passing**

 - Long Range passing

 - Applying Curl to passes and crosses

- **Advanced Close Control Skills**

 - Tricks with the ball

 - Rounding the keeper

- **Advanced Trapping**

 - Chest to Foot

 - Thigh to Foot

Goalkeeping Skills (U11/U12 - Ages 10-12)

Basic Goalkeeping Elements

- Introduction to goalkeeping equipment - Goalkeepers must have gloves, a padded goalie shirt, and padded goalie shorts/pants if desired.
- Theory of Angles - Keepers learn angles from different positions and where to place themselves in response to the position of the ball on the field.
- Correct hand position - "W" shape.
- Correct stance
- Diving Techniques
- Catching Techniques
- Parrying Techniques
- Distribution Techniques - Short range throwing and punting
- Clearing kicks

Advanced Goalkeeping Elements

- Reading the game.
- Punching
- Command of defensive area
- Coping with set pieces
- Penalty kicks
- Distribution techniques - Long range throwing and punting
- Goal kicks

Game Structure for Players (U11/U12 - Ages 10-12)

At this age, small-sided games of 3v3 or 4v4 should be used as much as possible in practice sessions. It is also important to play games of 7v7 or 8v8 as players have developed more team awareness.

Coaching Progression: U13+ (Ages 13 and up)

This age group and above should have very sound basic soccer skills. With each successive season players should continue to develop and improve the details of all skills toward perfection. It will be difficult for players who still struggle with coordination or who are new to the game to keep up with the strides of others at this age.

- They should have developed their fine motor skills.
- They should have a much better degree of accuracy.
- Their coordination should be virtually developed.
- They are striving for realism and leave the fantasy world behind.
- They are playing for fun and enjoyment with the added component of competitiveness.
- They should understand team play.
- They should be motivated to practice for continued improvement.
- They tend to emulate their sporting heroes.

Of paramount importance of developing youth soccer players at this age group is to significantly further the tactical education of the player, and consequently, advance the skill levels to cope with the increase in pace and strength. As always we must ensure that the fostering of a genuine pleasure of playing the game is continued.

Basic Skills (Ages 13 and up)

Maximum speed and proficiency should be attached to all of these skills.

- **Advanced Passing**

Passing with both feet over all distances with both feet.

Crossing, both driven and curled. Players should be able to cross off a dribble and chip off a dead ball.

- **Advanced Trapping**

Trapping with any legal part of the body with ease

- **Advanced Heading**

Defensive headers - Taking punts or any other balls in the air and directing them toward teammates or space.

Nodding the ball - Bringing balls from the air to feet with ease and on the move.

Attacking headers - Attacking the ball on free play crosses, corners, in-direct kicks, and throw ins.

- **Advanced Dribbling**

Dribbling with complete vision - No ball watching. Players should be able to make things happen off the dribble. Players should be very strong in 1 v 1 situations, but smart enough to know when to distribute the ball.

- **Advanced Shooting**

Shooting from all ranges.
Finishing from most angles

- **Intermediate Close Control Skills**

One - touch, two-touch, and creative exchanges

Moves - Know how to perform v-cut, j-cut, lunge, matthews, scissors, german, and kruyf and uses them effortlessly in appropriate situations.

Advanced Skills for Players Aged 13+

- Proficiency in dribbling and controlling the ball.
- A thorough understanding of spatial awareness and play development with and without the ball.
- Very aggressive to the ball - understands the importance of winning 50-50 balls and getting first touch.

Goalkeeping Skills for Players Aged 13+

- All Goalies have proper goalkeeping equipment.
- Goalies understand their placement in relationship to the ball.
- Goalies diving techniques will improve each season.
- Catching Techniques - Goalies are comfortable catching driven balls, high balls, etc.
- Correct positioning of hands - Goalies know when hands should be in 'W', etc.
- Goalies know punching techniques and when to use them.
- Goalies know correct stance in free play and dead ball situations.
- Goalies know how/when to close an attacking player down.
- Goalies know parrying techniques.
- Distribution Techniques - Goalies can throw, punt, clear, and take goal kicks with accuracy.
- Clearing kicks - Goalies know when to come out to clear a ball and when to collect.
- Goal kicks - Goalies can play the ball far and accurate.
- Reading the game and communicate to all players on the field. The Keeper should be directing all play during the game. This may include getting teammates to move up, mark up, distribute the ball, make runs, spread out, switch fields, drop back, etc.
- Command of defensive area - The goalie is responsible for the defensive third.
- Goalkeeping for set pieces - Goalies know what to do on all dead balls, etc.
- Penalty kicks

Game Structure For Players Aged 13+

At this age, small-sided games of 4v4 up to 8v8 should be used as much as possible in practice sessions.

Players in this age group are ready for 11v11 games under full match conditions. They should also practice with 11 v 11 games and scrimmages regularly. All players should know and work to improve all aspects of the full game constantly.

Coaching Expectations

The main priority of the Blair Soccer Association is to provide youth with safety, enjoyment, and opportunities to improve individual, and team soccer skills in addition to life skills.

Therefore, we encourage our coaches to develop their own soccer skills and knowledge to maintain adequate coaching proficiency within our club.

The BSA expects all coaches to:

- Strive to use enthusiasm while instructing their players in an educational and enjoyable soccer environment.
- Encourage and motivate their players to reach their potential playing ability.
- Learn all the rules and regulations of the game and enforce them within his/her team.
- Learn and teach all skills outlined in the coaching progression within the appropriate age group. (The BSA aims to maintain consistency among its teams to provide the best possible environment for enjoyment and growth in soccer.)
- Instill in players, a sense of discipline, self-motivation, confidence, and respect appropriate to their age level.
- Provide appropriate playing time for every player. (see coaching rules) As players progress to competitive teams coaches are expected to use sound and objective judgment in assigning playing time.
- Model and promote positive sportsmanship during all soccer activities.
- Refrain from inappropriate behavior during all soccer activities. This includes, but is not limited to foul language, ridiculing others, yelling negative criticisms or comments toward players, referees, parents, or spectators.
- Refrain from smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, and being intoxicated or under the influence of any substance at all soccer activities.
- Share, review, and enforce player and parent expectations with all players and parents on their team.
- Share and enforce these expectations with any other Blair coach, parent, or spectator as necessary.

The BSA expects all coaches to strictly adhere to all KidSafe, NSSA, and BSA guidelines including but not limited to those listed above.

Player Expectations

The Blair Soccer Club exists to provide our community with enjoyment in a soccer environment while instilling positive sportsmanship, responsibility, confidence, discipline, motivation, and respect within our youth. It is upon this foundation that we base our youth expectations so that they become better equipped to face the challenges in the game of soccer and in life.

The BSA expects all players to:

- Work hard at practice and games to improve their soccer skills and understanding of the game.
- Have a positive and never quit attitude.
- Exemplify and demonstrate sportsmanship at all times.
- Display confidence, not arrogance.
- Conduct themselves with class and dignity at all times.
- Avoid the use of alcohol and any illegal substances.
- Respect all officials and coaches and accept their decisions without question.
- Never engage in dissent toward any official, coach, player, or spectator.
- Never use vulgar or profane language.
- Give encouragement to their fellow teammates.
- Attend and be prompt to all games & practices.
- Contact the coach if they will be absent 24 hours prior to the event when possible.
- Immediately report any injury to the coach.
- Respect the coach, opponents, referees, and spectators.
- Abide by the coach's decision regarding playing time and positioning.
- Learn and obey the laws of the game.
- Learn and follow the rules, policies, and procedures of the state, team, and club.
- Approach the Coach with any personal soccer related problems.
- Come to each game mentally and physically prepared to do their best. This includes arriving in time to allow for all warm-up activities.
- Have proper equipment, and bring them to each practice and game. This includes proper shoes, regulation shin guards worn under socks, appropriate clothing, ball, water bottle, etc. Players should leave watches, jewelry, hairpins, and hats at home.
- Treat minor injuries promptly and properly. Seek early medical help for physical problems that persist.
- Let the coach know before practice or a game of any condition that might affect your ability to play.

Pre-game Recommendations

- Avoid late nights or spend-the-night parties on the night before a game. More than a few soccer games have been knowingly "forfeited" the night before the soccer match. Fatigue, as a result of too little sleep, increases the risk of injury.
- Build up body fluids before the game. Start drinking water and or sports drinks as much as 24-48 hours before the game. Try to take in an adequate amount of proper fluid throughout the day of the game, avoiding soft drinks, milk, and high sugar drinks.
- Eat sensibly, especially on the day of a game. For instance, milk, peanuts or carbonated drinks before a game will shorten a player's endurance. The day prior to a game is a good time to eat foods with a lot of carbohydrates, such as pasta.
- A pre-game warm-up to get an abundant flow of blood to the muscles including stretching activities designed to increase flexibility and minimize the possibility of muscle pulls or injury is recommended.

Additional Notes

Developmental and competitive soccer exposes players to a more assertive level of play. The focus on training is more rigorous in comparison to recreational soccer. It is intended to enhance the players' soccer skills with the expectation of preparing them for a further competitive environment in the future. Therefore, the level of expected commitment will be higher than that of the recreation program.

Players will be expected to attend all practices with the exception of emergencies, etc. In the event that your child will be absent from a practice or game please call the coach in advance. It is understood that many youth are involved in multiple activities, however, if a conflict arises between a soccer game and another youth activity it is expected that the first commitment will be the soccer game. Players may lose playing time for frequent absence from practices and/or games.

Players are expected to follow all guidelines, rules, and regulations set forth by the Nebraska State Soccer Association and Blair Soccer Association. Any violation of these rules and regulations may result in full or partial suspension of play.

Parent Expectations

The Blair Soccer Association strongly encourages positive parental support. We want parents to be involved in the activities of their children. However, being involved does not mean controlling all aspects of a child's social and athletic experience. Some of the following parent guidelines are taken from the NSCAA and are expected of our parents, guardians, and other spectators.

- 1. Be positive.** Be supportive. Cheer for the team. Encourage all of the players. Keep negative comments to yourself, especially those directed at another parent's child. Remember that the players are doing the best that they can and that playing good soccer is more difficult than it looks.
- 2. Do not coach.** Let the coaches make adjustments as they see the need. Many times the instruction from a spectator is exactly the opposite of the instruction given by the coach. Allow the players the freedom to make their own decisions and learn from their mistakes. Spectator statements like "Stay Wide," "Clear It," "Pass The Ball," "Get Rid of It," "Move Up," "Move Back," etc., tend to undermine the need for players to communicate with each other. The only coaching comments a player should hear are those directly from the coach.
- 3. Never address players on the other team, except to encourage them.**
- 4. Treat the officials with respect.** All officials make mistakes. All humans make mistakes. Let the officials be human. Let the coaches approach the officials if they feel the need. The referee may be wrong, but are they wrong more than you are? Have you ever seen a referee change his mind because a parent shouted at him or her?
- 5. Do not engage in game-related discussions/arguments with parents from the opposing team.** We will be playing these teams for many years to come. We want to be known in the soccer community as an organization that has class whether we win, lose or draw. The game score will not be remembered. The argument or inappropriate remarks will be.
- 6. Leave the game on the field.** When the game is over, no amount of negative comments, questions or discussions with the players, officials or coaches can change the outcome. Regardless of the outcome, the coaches will evaluate the performance, reinforce the good things, and work to correct the things needing improvement.
- 7. Keep the game fun.** Winning is more fun than losing, but each player should enjoy playing because they love the game. Avoid offering bribes or "pumping up" your child. Encourage them to become self-motivated. Make sure that you take time to enjoy the game yourself. I have heard many comments from players that they dread it when their parents shout at the referee, coach, or others. It is noticeable that when parents get more and more agitated, their child gets more and more withdrawn during the game. Many youth would rather quit trying or avoid the play than risk making a mistake so a parent could yell it out to everyone.

The BSA expects parents to:

- Encourage their children to attend and arrive on time at all practices and games.
- Provide transportation to and from all practices and games.
- Provide and promote positive sportsmanship during all soccer activities.
- Refrain from inappropriate behavior during all soccer activities.
- Refrain from smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, or being intoxicated at all soccer activities.
- Share and enforce these expectations with any other family members and/or spectators who accompany them to the activity.

The BSA strives to maintain a positive image inside and outside of the Blair community. Parents can help us by strictly following all NSSA and BSA guidelines including but not limited to those listed above.